Chapter 19
HOW SHALL WE HANDLE THIS...
...SIR JINSHI?
IT WAS FORTUNATE THAT FENGMING WAS DETERMINED THE SOLE CULPRIT OF THE POISONING...
...SO HER MISTRESS INCURRED NO BLAME.
AFTER FENGMING'S EXECUTION, THE ASSETS OF HER RELATIVES WERE SEIZED.
THEY WERE ALL SENTENCED TO PUNISHMENT BY MUTILATION WITH VARYING DEGREES OF SEVERITY.
AND NOW ...

...HERE BEFORE ME LIES THE LIST OF ALL FENGMING'S RELATIVES AND THEIR ASSOCIATES.
INCLUDED IN THIS LIST ARE THE CLIENTS OF THE FAMILY BUSINESS...
...WHICH SEEMINGLY EXTENDED TO MORE THAN JUST BEEKEEPING.
AROUND 80 GIRLS FROM THIS LIST WERE PLACED HERE AT THE INNER COURT.
THAT'S SOME SUCCESS RATE.
NOW ...
...WHAT AM I TO DO WITH YOU?
MAO-MAO

Chapter 19 Miscommunication

...APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN ASSOCI-ATES OF FENG-MING'S FAMILY.
THE MEN WHO ABDUCTED AND SOLD THE APOTH-ECARY GIRL...
IF THAT IS MY WISH, HMM ...?
WE COULD CONCEAL THE FACT, IF THAT IS YOUR WISH.
IF I GIVE THE WORD, IT WILL COME TO PASS WITHOUT ANYONE QUESTIONING THE RIGHT OR WRONG OF IT.
ORDERING IT DONE IS BUT A SIMPLE MATTER.
HE HAS A POINT.

IT WOULD BE BETTER TO JUST MAKE A DECISION.
IF WE HIDE IT, THEN SHE CAN STAY HERE.
SHE WHO SO DILIGENTLY OBSERVES THE SOCIAL HIERARCHY BETWEEN COMMONER AND NOBLE ...
...WOULD CARRY OUT ANY KIND OF ORDER GIVEN TO HER, EVEN ONE SHE DISLIKED.
BUT IF THAT ORDER ...
...WAS CONTRARY TO HER WISHES...

...THAT SHE'S BEEN TRAPPED IN A PLACE SHE DOESN'T CARE FOR?
...HOW WOULD SHE...
...HANDLE THE REAL-IZATION...
WOULD THE DIVIDE BETWEEN US GROW EVEN WIDER?
THE VERY THOUGHT TERRIFIES ME.

MAO-MAO
WAS SHE NOT JUST A CONVENIENT PAWN?
SIR JINSHI.
A MASS DIS-MISSAL ...?
I'M TOLD EVERYONE FROM YOU-KNOW-WHO'S FAMILY AND ALL THE GIRLS PLACED HERE FROM CLIENTS OF THEIRS ARE GOING TO BE LET GO.
YUP!
HUH.
IT SOUNDS LIKE IT'S QUITE A FEW PEOPLE!

FOR SOME REASON, I'VE GOT A REALLY BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.
THAT FAMILY MUST'VE BEEN WHEELING AND DEALING WITH PEOPLE ALL OVER THE PLACE.
ALL THESE GIRLS I KNOW ARE WORRIED ABOUT HOW THEY'RE SUDDENLY GOING TO BE FIRED.
I COULD HAVE SOME KIND OF CONNECTION TO THEM AND JUST NOT KNOW IT.
GOING BY THE DOCUMENTS I REVIEWED BEFORE, FENGMING'S FAMILY WERE MERCHANTS INVOLVED IN TRADE.
IF I GO HOME NOW ...
IT'S JUST BAD TIMING.
IT WOULD BE REALLY INCONVE-NIENT TO BE LET GO.
I STILL HAVEN'T FOUND THEM ANY NEW CLIENTELE SINCE LI HAKU.
I MEAN, I'D HAPPILY GO BACK TO THE PLEASURE DISTRICT.

...THE OLD BAT'S DEFINITELY GONNA PUT ME UP FOR SALE!!
FWSH
GRANNY!
I'M HOME!
HERE'S YOUR FIRST CUS-TOMER!
ALL OUT OF BREATH? THAT'S UNUSUAL.
SIR JINSHI ...!
.....!
UH, ERM ...!

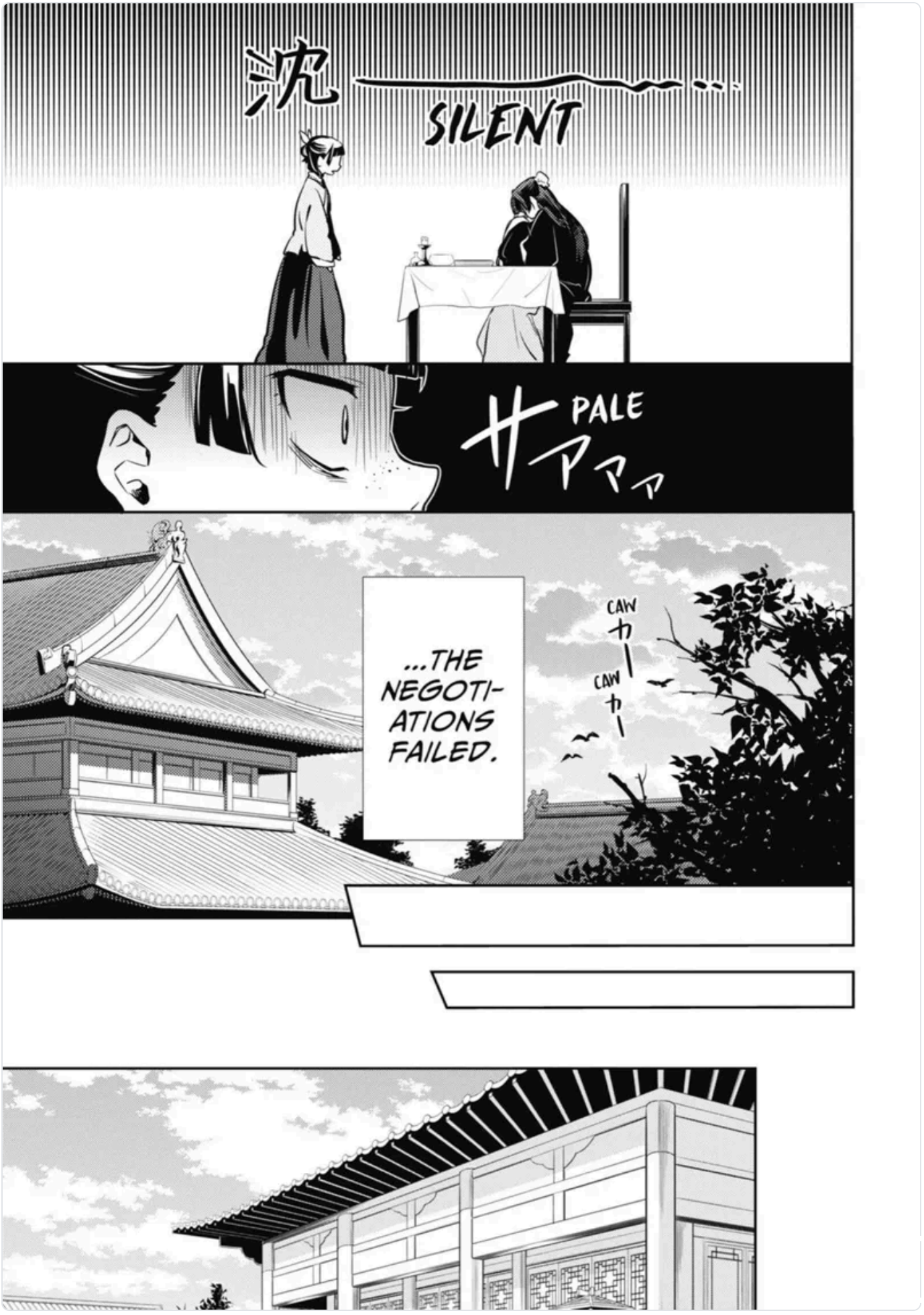
CATCH YOUR BREATH ALREADY! YOUR FACE IS BEET RED.
ER, UH, UMM, WELL...
TH-THERE'S SOME-THING I'D LIKE TO...
...TALK TO YOU ABOUT.
ALL RIGHT. LET'S TALK INSIDE.
YES, THAT'S RIGHT.
THIS IS ABOUT THE MASS DISMISSAL, ISN'T IT?
I WAS WONDERING WHETHER OR NOT I WAS SLATED FOR DISMISSAL.
HERE IS THE LIST.
トサッ
FWUMP

翡翠宮
JADE PALACE
MAO-MAO
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO?
I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO ASK HIM TO LET ME STAY.
I'M BUT A SERVANT HERE AT THE INNER COURT.
I SHOULDN'T BEG.
I KNOW THAT.
SO THIS MEANS I'M GOING TO BE LET GO, DOESN'T IT?
I'M...
...JUST A SERVANT HERE.

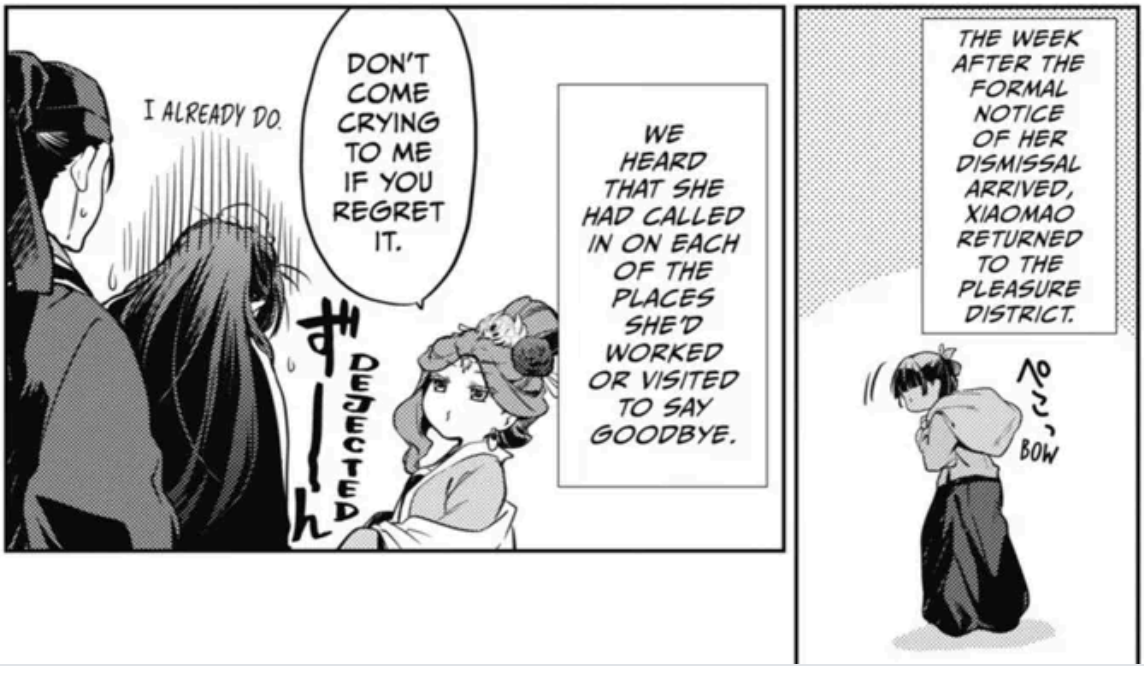
I'LL DO AS I'M TOLD AND FOLLOW YOUR ORDERS, WHETHER IT BE TO WORK AS A SERVANT, MAKE MEALS FOR THE OTHER SERVANTS HERE...
...OR TASTE FOOD FOR POISON.
THAT'S RIGHT.
SO LONG AS HE COMMANDS IT, I'LL DO WHATEVER IT IS TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITIES.
EVEN IF IT MEANS A DECREASE IN MY WAGES, I WON'T COMPLAIN.
IF IT'S TO PUT OFF SELLING MY BODY...
SO...!
...I'LL FIND A WAY TO NAB SOME NEW CUSTOMERS, COME HELL OR HIGH WATER.

PLEASE DON'T KICK ME OUT!
VERY WELL, THEN.

SO YOU'LL ...?
SMILE
I'LL SEE TO IT THAT YOUR COMPEN-SATION IS READIED.


SILENT
PALE
...THE NEGOTI-ATIONS FAILED.
CAW
CAW

DEPRESSED
どよよよよ
JUST HOW LONG DOES HE INTEND TO SIT THERE AND BROOD?
DEPRESSED
どよ
DEPRESSED
どよ
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT, MISTER.
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD HAVE KEPT HER HERE.


I ALREADY DO.
DON'T COME CRYING TO ME IF YOU REGRET IT.
DEJECTED
すーん
WE HEARD THAT SHE HAD CALLED IN ON EACH OF THE PLACES SHE'D WORKED OR VISITED TO SAY GOODBYE.
THE WEEK AFTER THE FORMAL NOTICE OF HER DISMISSAL ARRIVED, XIAOMAO RETURNED TO THE PLEASURE DISTRICT.
ぺこっ
BOW

PANIC
PANIC
I WANT THAT OOONE!
...I'VE BEEN TRYING HARD TO FIND SOMETHING NEW AND UNUSUAL FOR HIM TO PLAY WITH, BUT...
NOW THAT HE'S LOST HIS FAVORITE TOY...
BUT THAT'S NOT RIGHT.
DARK AND じめ
HE DIDN'T WANT TO TREAT HER AS AN OBJECT...
...AND LET HER GO, AFTER ALL.
じめ GLOOMY
I SHOULD PROBABLY STOP EQUATING HER WITH A TOY.

UGH. WHAT A TRULY TIME-CONSUMING AND EMBARRASSING MASTER.
どよん DEPRESSED
どよん DEPRESSED
ACHOO!
IF A REPLACEMENT WON'T DO...
...THEN I'LL JUST HAVE TO GO GET HIM THE REAL ONE.
?